

BSBI eNews – June 2019

From Jim McIntosh, Senior Country Officer, [jim.mcintosh@bsbi.org](mailto:jim.mcintosh@bsbi.org)

### New BSBI Ireland Officer

Our new Ireland Officer is Sarah Pierce. Sarah was a field ecologist with the Open Air Laboratories (OPAL) at the University of Nottingham where she worked on a major citizen science project encouraging thousands of people of all ages and backgrounds to conduct ecological surveys and submit their data. She will continue to work one day a week as a Research Fellow at the University of Nottingham until November. Her PhD was on the effects of climate change on grassland communities and she was a member of the British Ecological Society and involved with the Nottingham Wildlife Trust until she moved to Ireland.

Sarah's first day is on the 4th of June and she'll be working for BSBI for 3.2 days a week, based at home in Cork, but spending a couple days a month at the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin in Dublin. Please give her a warm welcome and watch for more info about Sarah on the website [News page](#).

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Senior Country Officer

### Aquatic Plant Project – Ireland

National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) are funding an ambitious programme of training and recording in aquatic habitats and species in the Republic of Ireland during 2019. The BSBI is the lead partner in this project. The aim of the project is to train BSBI members on this difficult group of species, and at the same time record what is seen. We have leading experts involved with this exciting project: Chris Preston, Cilian Roden, Lynda Weeks and Nick Stewart.

The first confirmed dates are:

- 22<sup>nd</sup> June at Lavistown Study Centre, Co. Kilkenny. A training day led by Lynda Weeks.
- 23<sup>rd</sup> June, a day in the field based at Cleggan, Co. Galway. Another training day, where it is hoped that nearly all known Irish aquatic species will be seen. Led by Cilian Roden.

Other confirmed dates are: 29<sup>th</sup> June through to 7<sup>th</sup> July where training and recording will be in the north-west of the country, and 17<sup>th</sup> July through to 25<sup>th</sup> July where the training and recording will be in the Midlands and south east. Locations and meeting points are still at the planning stage.

Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) are funding a similar training and recording scheme in Northern Ireland. Nick Stewart will be the lead botanist in the north and details of the venues and dates will be announced shortly.

If you would like to take part and are interested in further information please contact me, Paul Green, E-mail: [bsbivcr4h12@gmail.com](mailto:bsbivcr4h12@gmail.com) or mobile: 00 353 (0)87 7782496. Updates will also be posted on the new [Aquatic Plant Project](#) page on the BSBI website.

[Paul Green](#), BSBI Aquatic Plant Project Manager

## **Callitriche and Aquatic Plants workshop at Llangors Lake**

On Saturday 22nd June, Brecknockshire is hosting a *Callitriche* identification workshop, led by aquatics expert Richard Lansdown, author of the [BSBI Water Starworts Handbook](#). There will be an indoor tutorial with material from all the British species, plus an outdoor visit to Llangors Lake to learn collecting techniques and identification in the field and follow-up tutorial. The event costs £20 pp and includes tea and coffee - please bring your own lunch and do bring wellies! All welcome - from across Britain and Ireland - but please note that this is not a beginner-level course. It will be a great opportunity to learn from a national aquatics expert so prompt booking is recommended if you want to be sure of getting a space. You can book on the [BSBI Brecknock](#) webpage.

[Barbara Brown](#), BSBI Welsh Officer

## **Hectads per taxon x custom date classes**

Assessing recording over long time periods, to see which taxa may have increased or decreased (or that are under-recorded recently), is best done at hectad scale. [This query](#) - lists species & hybrids with the number of hectads recorded 1950 - 1986, 1987 - 1999, and since 2000, using vc96 as an example. (Change the vc as required). It uses the 'custom' option to subdivide by date class. It is interesting to click on '2000-' header to sort, and again to sort in the reverse order. To examine the results further, it is best to download the results to a spreadsheet, and undertake further analysis there, by adding a column to calculate the change in recorded hectads 1987 - 1999 compared with post 2000.

[Andy Amphlett](#), BSBI Recorder Banff

## **Atlas 2020**

We have been getting faster and faster at digitising and uploading records in recent years. A massive 80% of 2018 records arrived at the DDb in 2018, leaving just 20% to be added in the first few months of 2019. However, with the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2019 deadline for the final season's data it will be more important than ever to digitise (and sync) records as you go along. I know this is a big ask when fieldwork seems the greater priority. But 'little and often' is *always* better than a big backlog. Another great advantage of the 'little and often' approach is that if there is a query about a record you digitise you are more likely to remember the answer.

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

## **Safety on Field Meetings**

The field meetings season is now well underway and I hope many have been out and about enjoying some spring botanising. Remember if you are leading field meetings you should always include a safety briefing in your welcome talk. Simple slips and trips and traffic are obvious hazards that you should always remind people about, but less obvious hazards like Weil's disease and ticks should also be covered. Another safety-related issue to consider when organising field meetings is having a plan B if weather or site permissions prevent plan A! If you do have to change plans please make sure that all participants know what the new plans are.

Safety on field meetings is covered in the comprehensive [Leading BSBI Field Meetings](#) Guidance on the [Field Meetings](#) page. Take a look and remind yourself of the safety issues.

[Jonathan Shanklin](#), Hon. Field Meetings Secretary

## Scottish Rough Squad

We have a Scottish Rough Squad co-ordinator – Matt Parratt. All Scottish Rough Squad (SRS) meetings will aim to plug gaps in Atlas coverage in mountainous and remote areas this year. So, if you are interested in our upland flora, why don't you sign up for notifications of SRS field meetings? Some will be day trips, while others will involve staying in bothies or camping. We plan to start off with some day trips to hill areas in Dumbarton and West Perthshire and progress onto a multi-day trip to the [Tarf Hotel](#) in the Cairngorms. Matt will estimate the distance and total ascent for each trip so you know what you might be letting yourself in for! As far as possible we will fix up days in advance and have backup dates in case of bad weather. If you are interested please let [Matt Parratt](#) know!

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

## Malham Tarn Annual Summer Meeting

I'm slowly drawing all the threads for the [Summer Meeting](#) together, and all those that have booked should have heard from me to confirm the booking. It is now fully booked, though if there are cancellations, I will let members know. At the moment the signals for whether the weather will be wet or dry and warm or cool are not very strong for most of England, so we will have to take what comes.

[Jonathan Shanklin](#), Hon. Field Meetings Secretary

## BSBI Annual Exhibition Meeting

BSBI's Meetings & Communications Committee is currently making plans for this year's [Exhibition Meeting](#), to be held at the Natural History Museum in London on 23<sup>rd</sup> November. Everybody welcome! Put the date in your diary and (if you're a BSBI member) look out for a flyer in the September issue of *BSBI News*.

[Jonathan Shanklin](#), Hon. Field Meetings Secretary

## BSBI Scottish Spring Conferences

A total of 40 recorders and members participated in two one-day Scottish Spring Conferences in April. The first was held at RBG Edinburgh and the second at RSPB's offices in Aberdeen. The theme was [Atlas 2020](#) of course and the programme included an [update and progress report on the project](#), a round-the-table discussion on what Recorders are planning to do in its final year and [how BSBI members can help](#). A couple practical mini-workshops on *Dryopteris* & Dandelions were followed by a variety of interesting flash talks. [More...](#)

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

## BSBI Wales Spring Meeting & AGM

What better excuse to enjoy some spring sunshine and botanising than the Wales Spring Meeting and AGM held between Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> and Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> May at the Stradey Park Hotel in Llanelli?

Richard and Kath Pryce (County Recorders for Carmarthenshire) prepared an action-packed programme including three field trips - to Burry Port Harbour, Capel Dyddgen SSSI & Pembrey Burrows. Highlights included *Silene gallica* (Small-flowered catchfly), *Silene conica* (Sand catchfly) and

*Linaria supina* (Prostrate Toadflax) at Burry Port; *Geranium columbinum* (Long stalked Crane's bill) and *Trocdaris (Carum) verticillatum* (Whorled Caraway) at Capel Dyddgen and *Ranunculus lingua* (Greater Spearwort), *Botrychium lunaria* (Moonwort), *Anacamptis morio* (Green-winged Orchid) and Small Blue butterflies at Pembrey Burrows.

On Tuesday evening Richard gave a talk on 40 years of botanising in Carmarthenshire. On Wednesday we held a [Workshop on Validation](#) (take a look!) followed by dinner and a summary of Atlas progress by Pete Stroh. Nigel Stringers finished the evening's entertainment with an excellent talk on rusts and other fungal plant parasites.

[Barbara Brown](#), BSBI Welsh Officer

### **Sagina (Pearlworts)**

*Sagina maritima* (Sea Pearlwort) may be more frequent inland as a halophyte. Road verges and or waste ground near roads etc. should be searched. Any plants rooting at the nodes will be *S. procumbens* (Procumbent Pearlwort). However, small rosette-like plants that are not rooting at the nodes could be either species, though *S. maritima* may be more upright. As part of a study looking into useful characters for these two in difficult situations, please collect fresh voucher specimens and send to the address below – photos of the plant and close-ups of fruiting heads would be useful. *S. maritima* material from the more usual (coastal) habitats would also be welcome. The BSBI referee has been kept informed about this study.

The common *Sagina filicaulis* (Slender Pearlwort) can have spiny-papillose seeds and this may become separable as a variant. If you can find any it would be worth recording it in the comments section as, 'papillosa'. The rather similar *Sagina apetala* (Annual Pearlwort) rarely occurs here in urban situations. I would appreciate any fresh specimens of plants that fit this taxon. [There is a useful [Youtube video](#) separating *S. filicaulis* and *S. apetala* by Botany Bill – Ed.]

[Michael Wilcox](#): 43 Roundwood Glen, Greengates, Bradford, BD10 0HW

### **BSBI Photographic Competition**

Remember to take your camera with you when you are out and about this summer and take nice photographs of plants for the BSBI Photographic Competition. The two 2019 categories are 1) Natives and 2) Aliens so that should give you plenty scope! [More...](#)

[Jim McIntosh](#), BSBI Scottish Officer

### **New on the website**

- The webpage for the new Irish [Aquatics Plant Project](#) (see above) has now gone live.
- The new [BSBI Periodicals webpage](#) has links to webpages for each of BSBI's periodicals, including the new archive pages for back issues of the [Scottish Newsletter](#), [Welsh Bulletin](#) and [Irish Botanical News](#).
- The collated County Recorders' Annual Reports have all been uploaded to the country webpages for [England](#), [Wales](#), [Scotland](#) and [Ireland](#). They are a great read. Take a look!
- County pages for Lanarkshire, East Perthshire, South Aberdeenshire and Sussex have all been updated with progress reports on local recording, county newsletters or details of this year's field meetings, as well as new contact details for County Recorders. Head over to the [Local Botany page](#) to find links to all county webpages. The Local Botany page itself also features

more links than ever to help you contact your County Recorders. If you're a County Recorder and you'd like your contact details to be made available on the page, please let us know.

- The [Scotland](#) and [Scottish Conferences](#) webpages have been updated by Scottish Officer Jim McIntosh; the [Wales](#) page and various county pages in Wales have been updated by Welsh Officer Barbara Brown; and the [Irish Conferences](#) webpage was updated by outgoing Ireland Officer Maria Long.
- The [Plant Crib](#) webpage features an updated crib to *Taraxacum* Section *Celtica* – thanks to Tim Rich.
- The [Axiophytes](#) and [NPMS](#) pages have been updated with the latest links and guidance.
- The [Field Meetings](#), [Meetings Diary](#), [Summer Meeting](#) and [News](#) pages have all been updated (see above).
- The separate Governance website (BSBI members only, password-protected) has been updated with minutes of recent meetings.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer

### **On the News & Views blog in April and May**

We explained [how to identify bluebells](#), including hybrids; we reported on [Somerset botanists' herbarium day](#) and the Irish Spring Conference (parts [one](#) and [two](#)) and invited botanists to [book for the Welsh AGM](#); we alerted readers to the [forthcoming publication of the Flora of the Isle of Bute](#) and flagged recent [news from Arran](#); we offered advance looks at forthcoming issues of [BSBI News](#) and [British & Irish Botany](#); we asked readers to [send pearlwort specimens](#) for a study Mike Wilcox is running; we told readers about [wild thyme, an ingredient in Byron's Gin](#) whose contributions help fund BSBI's training programme – and we published the [first report for 2019 from a BSBI Training Grant recipient](#); we told you about an [art exhibition with a botanical theme](#); invited people to register for the inaugural ['Plants, People, Planet' symposium](#) at RBG Kew; and we featured a full-length, in-depth [interview with Dr Rachel Murphy](#), the Volunteer Manager for the National Plant Monitoring Scheme.

[Louise Marsh](#), BSBI Communications Officer